



## Rhode Island Commission on Women

### **Position Paper On Quality of Health Care\***

The Rhode Island Commission on Women supports universal, affordable, accessible, high quality health care for all women, as stated in its general position paper on women's health.\*\* The present position paper focuses on, and further defines, the quality of care.

Quality health care is care that is accessible, effective, safe, accountable, culturally competent and fair.

This means that:

- Providers possess the proper credentials, such as board certification in the appropriate specialty, and licensure.
- Providers deliver individualized care to meet the needs of the patient, including preventive care, treatment, follow up care and long-term care, at the right time, in the appropriate manner.
- Patients can access timely care, have accurate and understandable information about risks and benefits.
- Providers inform their patients about the options they have available to improve their medical outcomes.
- Patients are given information about their health plans.
- The rights of both patients and clinicians are respected.
- Health care is affordable and equally accessible to all.

**Rhode Islanders are demanding greater value and quality in their health care. To achieve these goals in today's rapidly changing health care environment, consumers need solid, reliable information to help them.**

A major issue for consumers and other health care purchasers is how to choose health care plans, practitioners, and facilities based on quality and value. We support local efforts to develop comparative information on the ability of health plans, practitioners and facilities to provide high-quality, accessible services that satisfy consumers. We also support local efforts to develop surveys to collect key information on consumers' attitudes about access to health care, use of specific services, health outcomes, perceived quality of care, and satisfaction with care.

In addition to helping consumers, such information can serve as a comparative performance measurement tool that provides feedback to health plans, providers, purchasers, and state policymakers about how well service providers are performing and meeting the expectations and needs of their customers.

We recognize the importance of the patient in collaborating with her health care providers, in becoming a partner in her own care and in taking responsibility for compliance with care.

The Rhode Island Commission on Women supports policies and legislation that ensure the delivery of quality health care to all Rhode Islanders. Especially vulnerable to suboptimal care are underserved segments of the consumer population, such as women, children, minority groups and older Americans. Legislative measures are sometimes necessary to achieve the goal of equality and fairness for all people in a just society.

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\*Versions reviewed and approved by RICW Health Committee on January 8 and February 26, 2001. Reviewed and approved by RICW Executive Committee on February 19, 2001. Approved and adopted by the Rhode Island Commission on Women on March 12, 2001.

\*\*Position Paper on Women's Health, adopted by the Rhode Island Commission on Women on January 11, 2000.